

REMARKS

The Examiner has required an election of Species. Applicant hereby confirms his election of Species 1, covered by Claims 1, 2, 4, and 22-24. Thus, the Examiner has withdrawn Claims 3, 5-21, and 25-27 from consideration as drawn to non-elected species.

The Examiner has objected to the specification saying that on line 4 of paragraph 23, "85" should be "86." Applicant has amended paragraph 23 to clarify it. However, the number "85" referring to the bolt stem is correct. Reference number 86 refers to the hole through the coupling body through which the bolt stem 85 extends. Therefore, the amendment to paragraph 23 clarifies this and adds the reference to the hole 86 which otherwise is not mentioned in the specification.

The Examiner has raised several objections to the language of the claims. Claims 1, 4, 22, 23, and 24 have been amended to correct the language in the claims referred to by the Examiner. The Examiner suggested that the preamble of all claims should be amended to recite "an end portion of at least one pipe." While the claims have all been amended to recite "an end portion," applicant does not believe that "of at least one pipe" is necessary. In all instances, whether the coupling is being attached to the end portion of one pipe or to the end portions of two pipes, the coupling is being attached "to an end portion of a pipe." It is submitted that the preamble is proper without adding "at least one."

The Examiner has rejected the elected Claims 1, 2, and 22 under 35 USC 102 as anticipated by Rodgers. Claims 1 and 4 have now been amended to recite that the coupling has "an outer end taper corresponding to the inner end taper", and that the means for securing the jaw members to the coupling body are "cooperable with the outer end taper so that linear movement of the jaw members away from the end of the inner end taper adjacent the end of the coupling body causes movement of the jaw members radially outwardly of the coupling body away from the end portion of the pipe when received in the coupling body."

The drawings clearly show that the coupling body has an outer taper that corresponds with the inner taper. The wall of the coupling body is shown in the drawings as being of uniform thickness. This produces similar tapers of the inner and outer surfaces of the coupling body. The bolt heads that extend from the jaws, as shown best in Fig. 2, extend over the slot that the bolt extends through and rests on the outer surface of the coupling body. Thus, as the jaws move away from the end of the coupling body, with the bolt head riding on the outer surface of the coupling body as shown in the drawings, the bolt head moving along the outer surface will pull the jaws radially outwardly from a pipe end portion received in the coupling. This is supported also by lines 9-12 of Paragraph 4 which state: "Means, such as laterally extending slots through the inner end taper of the coupling body with bolts extending from the jaw members slidably through the slots, secure the jaw members to the coupling body and move the jaw members away from the received pipe when the jaw members are moved in such opposite direction." If a pipe is inserted into the coupling and the jaws are not spread enough to allow the pipe end to slide beneath the jaws, the pipe end will move the jaws toward the center of the coupling as the pipe is moved into the coupling. With the claimed configuration of the coupling, as the pipe moves the jaws toward the center of the coupling, the jaws will move radially outwardly and out of the way of the pipe end so that the pipe end will then move in beneath the jaws and move into coupling position in the coupling body.

This configuration is not shown or suggested by Rodgers. While Rodgers has an inner end taper, the outside of the coupling body is not tapered. Thus, Rodgers jaws cannot automatically move radially outwardly when moved toward the center of the coupling body. If a pipe end is inserted into Rodgers' coupling and hits the jaws, the jaws will move straight inwardly and will not move radially outwardly. Because the outer surface of the coupling body is straight, not tapered as in applicant's coupling body the bolt head cannot act to pull the jaws radially outwardly as the bolt slides along the outside surface. Thus, if the jaws are not manually moved outwardly by manually pulling the bolts radially outwardly while sliding the bolts along the coupling body, or by manually sliding the bolts along the coupling body and then manually tightening the bolts to pull the jaws

radially outwardly and hold them in the outward position, the jaws will block the pipe from moving into coupling position in the coupling body. Further, if Rodgers' bolts are tightened to hold the jaws in radially outward position to allow insertion of the pipe, the jaws will not move to holding position to securely hold the pipe in the coupling until the bolts are loosened sufficiently to allow the jaws to move radially inwardly. The jaws can not be moved linearly toward the end of the coupling body without loosening the bolts. Rodgers does not show applicant's outer taper so cannot anticipate applicant's claims as now amended. Further, nothing in Rodgers suggests such taper.

The Examiner has rejected Claims 1, 2, 4, and 22-24 under 35 USC 103 as unpatentable over Stillwagon in view of Rodgers. Stillwagon does not show or suggest the inner and corresponding outer taper nor the means securing the jaws to the coupling body that is cooperable with the outer taper. Stillwagon adds nothing to Rogers, and Rodgers adds nothing to Stillwagon, to suggest the configuration of applicat's claims as now amended.

Applicant's claims, as now amended, should be allowable. Please charge any fees that may be due to Deposit Account No. 13-1175 of the undersigned.

Respectfully,



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